

Legislative Updates of interest for Higher Education

Week of May 5 – May 9, 2008

Budget Update –

By Thursday, the House had amended the budget bills ([H.4800](#) and [H.4801](#)) returned them to the Senate. The House amended the Senate budget bill by insisting on its initial recommendations with further amendments to account for the reduced BEA estimates on which the Senate had based its budget.

Several of the House revisions affected the House's prior budget recommendations for higher education. Of note, the House amended its recommendations to include \$200,000 in recurring funding for the higher education electronic library or PASCAL. The Senate budget also includes \$200,000 recurring funding for this project which has been funded in the past four years with \$2,000,000 in nonrecurring funding. Additionally, the House amended recommendations for the funding of the scholarship programs by including necessary funding increases for LIFE, Palmetto Fellows and HOPE within the lottery funding. In its previous recommendations, the House had included these increases within State General Funds. The House reduced its recommendation for the lottery funding for the Centers of Economic Excellence program from \$30,000,000 to \$10,000,000. The Senate had also included this program, which is funded with lottery revenues, at \$10,000,000. The House included provisos to enact legislation passed earlier in the session by the House relating to this program (see H.4494). In regard to institutional funding recommendations, the House retained the cuts that had been recommended by the House and then eliminated several projects that had been recommended in one-time or nonrecurring funds. The House base reductions across institutions total \$22,895,184 across institutions, whereas, the Senate recommendations include base reductions across institutions totaling \$21,396,239. The non-recurring funding in the amended House budget recommendations for higher education institutions was reduced and now includes: \$4,500,000 for SC LightRail, \$500,000 for MUSC Rural Dentist program, \$1,112,299 for University Center of Greenville, and \$3,000,000 for CATT. Additionally, a budget proviso was amended to include one-time increases for MUSC and Technical College's Allied Health program. For past reports on House and Senate budget recommendations, see CHE's summary report for the [Week of March 10 – March 14](#) for information regarding the initial House recommendations for higher education and [Week of April 7 – April 11](#) for Senate recommendations.

After adopting amendments on Thursday, the House returned the budget to the Senate. It is expected that the budget recommendations will go to conference committee, which will include three members from each chamber, to work out the differences.

In the House –

On Tuesday, a subcommittee of Ways and Means met and considered several Senate bills including: [S.1140](#) relating to requirements of state agencies and energy conservation plans, [S.75](#) relating to the closing of the state's tuition prepayment plan, and [S.1252](#) relating to the Research Centers of Economic Excellence. The subcommittee voted to table S.1140 which will keep the bill in subcommittee; to amend S.75 in keeping with an FY 2007-08 budget proviso (60.13) to close the tuition prepayment program to new enrollees that had been enacted for FY 2007-08; and to amend S.1252 by striking the Senate language and inserting the language in [H.4494](#) relating to this program and had passed the House earlier in the session. [S.1022](#) relating to the Critical Needs Nursing Initiative received a favorable report in subcommittee during the week and will next be considered by the full Medical, Military and Public and Municipal Affairs Committee. The Higher Education Subcommittee of House Education and Public Works met on Wednesday. The subcommittee voted to report favorably to the full committee [S.991](#) which makes a technical correction to a code citation that had been inadvertently included in the chapter relating to CHE and voted to adjourn debate on [S.1207](#) relating to the composition of the SC State Board of Trustees and [S.1233](#) relating to the waiver of the out-of-state tuition differential for those establishing residency in South Carolina but working full-time in adjoining NC or GA counties and CHE regulations relating to SC HOPE Scholarships ([Document #3173](#)), Need-based Grants ([Document #3185](#)), Residency for Tuition and Fee Purposes ([Document #3172](#)) and the National Guard College Assistance Program ([Document # 3196](#)). It is noted that the subcommittee's action does not affect the 120 day review period of the General Assembly.

Also during the week, the House amended [S.950](#) relating to Denmark Technical College and authority to enter into ground lease agreements with private entities, gave the bill its third reading and returned the bill to the Senate.

For a look at upcoming House meetings, go to http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess117_2007-2008/blatmeet.htm

In the Senate –

[S.530](#) that would codify in permanent legislation a number of temporary provisions that have been included in the annual Appropriations Acts and [S.1115](#) relating to a residency exception for tuition and fee purposes for certain military and dependents received third reading on Wednesday. These bills were sent to the House where they were introduced and referred to the House Ways and Means Committee. [H.4408](#) relating to the course eligibility requirements for science and math enhancements for LIFE and Palmetto Fellows received its third reading in the Senate on Thursday and was enrolled for ratification. Once H.4408 is ratified, it will go to the Governor for consideration.

For a look at upcoming Senate meetings, go to http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess117_2007-2008/gresmeet.htm

Other –

On Thursday, a number of bills that had passed both the Senate and House and had been enrolled for ratification were ratified and await consideration of the Governor. Several of these bills relate to higher education including: [S.1077](#) relating to a procurement exemption for FCC licenses authorizing use of educational broadband service spectrum granted to Greenville and Trident Technical Colleges, [H.4520](#) relating to the authority and process by which USC could issue revenue bonds to provide funds for a new business school facility and renovation of the Close-Hipp building, and [H.4680](#) relating to the make-up of the Spartanburg Technical and Community College Area Commission. The Governor has five days to sign the bills into law, let the bills go into law without his signature, or veto the bills. If the bills are vetoed, a two-thirds vote in the Senate and House is required to override a veto.

Reminder: The above report is not intended to be all inclusive. Bill numbers are linked to the SC General Assembly page. The link should go to the most recent version of the bill. For additional information on legislation referenced above and other legislation relating to higher education, see http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/Legisl/HigherEd_Legis_List.xls. Detailed information on the 2008 Session of the General Assembly may be access at www.scstatehouse.net or from links included on CHE's website at <http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/LegislativeSession08.htm>.